

Fight the wardrive FIGHT FOR SOCIALISM

'PEACE' under imperialism is nothing more than preparation for war. This was one of the fundamental conclusions Lenin drew from his study of monopoly capitalism. Far from this being wrong, one sided or simply outdated Lenin has been proved correct by countless regional conflicts — two world wars and the drift towards a third.

Have no doubt about it, today imperialism is making preparations for war. Against this CND has predictably proved ineffective, the feminist women only peace camps have degenerated and the alternative production plans of various reformists have fallen on deaf ears.

'Western' 'defence' spending has soared over recent years. Thatcher is quadrupling the number of nuclear warheads. Britain has at its disposal, France has announced a major modernisation of its nuclear force and the Nakasone government in Japan has broken the country's pacifistic constitution in order to make Japan not only a great economic power, but sooner rather than later, a great military power as well. All the while Reagan has qualitatively upped the stakes by taking the whole deadly game into outer space.

For the big imperialist powers war is not a distant, unpleasant, 'never again' memory. They have fresh blood on their claws. Britain has been responsible for the deaths of thousands in the Six Counties and it has retained imperialist pride by savaging the Argentinian armed forces in the Falklands; France has been actively involved in north Africa; and post 'Vietnam syndrome' USA invaded tiny

Grenada, cynically attacked Libya and is conducting an undeclared war against revolutionary Nicaragua. Moreover the USA and the EEC are, even as these lines are written, threatening Syria with more than a diplomatic slap on the wrist.

But at this juncture the main focus of the arms drive, the purpose of many of the small wars and the most dangerous source of war is the US led anti-Soviet war drive. This directly flows from the growth of inter-imperialist contradictions yet manifests itself in the contradiction between socialism and capitalism in general and the contradiction between the USSR and the US in particular. Thus at present the US national rivalry against the USSR presents the main danger of a World War III and death and destruction which could cost billions of lives and throw the planet's productive forces back decades.

In the face of Mikhail Gorbachev's offer of ending the arms race and peaceful co-existence at Hofdi House in Reykjavik, Reagan talked peace, but his administration acted in the most provocative, uncompromising and warmongering anti-Soviet fashion.

The US did everything to wreck the Reykjavik talks by expelling Soviet diplomats, exploding yet another nuclear device in the Nevada Desert and ratcheting up international tensions through its backing of the Contras and its arrogant refusal to accept the ruling made by the World Court to desist from further acts of war against Nicaragua.

Naturally in the glare of publicity from the world's press at Reykjavik Reagan was forced to follow the 'rules' of a summit and counter

Gorbachev's disarmament proposals with his own.

Hence when Gorbachev proposed the elimination of all nuclear weapons in two five year stages, Reagan felt compelled to offer the elimination of all strategic ballistic missiles. Yet to prevent any agreement Reagan refused to put the Star Wars programme up for negotiation.

That this was no slip but a deliberate ploy to prevent any positive outcome of US/USSR talks was confirmed at the follow up meeting in Vienna. There the US retreated from the 'high ground' of total nuclear disarmament which had been the subject of the Gorbachev/Reagan mini-summit.

As if suffering from amnesia, Shultz coldly dismissed Soviet efforts to build on Reagan's Iceland concessions as nothing more than a "propaganda campaign". Smiling like Jaws from the James Bond films he then attacked Shevardnadze before the world's press as if the Iceland mini-summit had been ended by Soviet, not US, intransigence.

Far from Reagan simply wanting to defend the US behind a Star Wars shield, he aims for strategic superiority over the Soviet Union and a first strike capacity. It is this simple fact that has allowed Gorbachev to come out of his meetings with Reagan as the peacemaker while Reagan has stood exposed as the warmonger. The bourgeois media has, true to form, put this down to the 'Gorbachev style' and his ability to out-maneuvre and out-communicate the 'great communicator'. Hardly a convincing explanation when the truth is so easy to see.

Incontrovertibly the USSR wants peace. Socialism is a system with no interest or drive to wars of redivision. The policy of peaceful coexistence is no facade, it reflects a genuine desire by the Soviet Union for peace and the fact that the USA still has a significant economic and technological lead over it. To achieve something like military parity with the USA has cost the USSR dear, not least in slowing down its growth rates. Gorbachev must certainly fear that if the USSR is forced to defend itself by developing its own trillion rouble space weapons and defence systems, it could produce crippling results, and even a Polish type explosion.

In contrast, the USA is compelled along the road to new wars of redivision, not because of the military/industrial complex, let alone Reagan's psychology. No, the very nature of its economic system drives the whole US ruling class towards war.

The rate of profit has declined internationally and US capitalism has been getting a smaller and smaller slice of the cake. Its capitalists are under pressure from rivals in the EEC and Japan in traditional US markets and its hegemony over the capitalist world is fast being eroded. (Thatcher's public objection to Reagan's use of British nuclear weapons as a pawn to bargain with at Reykjavik is an indication of this).

To maintain its hegemony over world capitalism, hike up declining profit rates and reassert its market share the US is orchestrating an anti-Soviet war drive. This has the aim of opening up the socialist bloc, not only through nuclear blackmail, but also economic penetration and

fostering internal 'democratic' counterrevolution, as a source of raw materials and for the export of capital in order to exploit its workers.

We say the Soviet government is perfectly correct to negotiate with Reagan and stand by the policy of peaceful co-existence between capitalism and socialism. The offer of peaceful co-existence can be used as a holding operation and it certainly exposes the truth about imperialism to the world.

But this should not and cannot be used as a substitute for communists, like us, explaining that the imperialist powers cannot be made peaceful and must be put down like a rabid dog.

Genuine communists know peace must be fought for. Not in the Alternative Economic Strategy reactionary utopia of a non-imperialist capitalism, nor in a naive CND pacifist plea for 'sanity' between those constituting the United Nations, but in the future socialist revolution.

In fact whoever promises peace "without at the same time preaching the socialist revolution, or while repudiating the struggle for it" — is in the words of Lenin "deceiving the proletariat." Communists know that the drive to war will only be eliminated by eliminating the capitalist system itself. Those who really want peace, who mean it when they say they want to defend the Soviet Union, who dare follow the logic of truth through to practice, must retaliate against imperialism's attacks on small nations, its preparations for an attack on the Soviet Union and its socialist allies by propaganda and preparation for revolution.

Jack Conrad



COMMUNIST MORALITY

WHILE Thatcher and Kinnock vie with each other to claim the mantle of the 'moral majority', the system they defend cosigns millions to poverty.

While Tebbit attacks *Jenny lives with Eric and Martin* and the immorality of the 'permissive society', for 'honour's sake' Archer resigns as his deputy after offering a prostitute money if she would leave the country.

While the media uses moral blackmail to generate £ millions in charity, exploiting popular sympathy for the starving with Band Aid, Sports Aid and Fashion Aid, the imperialist banking system exacts £billions in interest payments from Africa.

While the left's opposition to capitalism collapses into cliche ridden moralising it is timely for *The Leninist* to comment on morality.

Let us begin by saying what morality is not. It is not just a load of backwoodsman nonsense. Neither is it a set of rigid arbitrarily defined rules handed down by some divine entity. Nor is morality simply a set of irrational prejudices emanating from the hypocritical, sordid minds of journalists working on the *Sun*, *Star* or the *Mail*.

Morality is necessary to all societies. It is indeed a product of and precondition for stable social interaction. Morality can play this role because it has been developed and tested by humanity, generation after generation, as a logically ordered system which can appraise individual or collective behaviour. Morality is in other words a system of spontaneously formed and generally recognised views: keep your word and buy the drinks when it's your turn are obvious examples of this.

So, clearly morality is different from law in that it is directed to all but is issued by nobody. Morality relies on consciousness in the form of feelings, urges and emotions and individuals complying with it because of collective pressure rather than a parliamentary vote, policemen and prisons.

Does this mean we agree with the morality of Thatcher, Kinnock and Tebbit? No, their morality is bourgeois, our morality is communist.

Modern society is split into classes. This means as well as having a general content which trumps particular social formations many moral precepts are class precepts and thus temporary. So as well as having a general morality, which says drive on the left hand side of the road, we also have a morality which justifies the existing order, its individualism, hypocrisy, robbery and decadence, and a morality which denies it.

Communist morality opposes the system and its attitudes towards sex, opposes the robbery of capitalist production, and denies the divine right of bourgeois rule. It denies the existence of both god and the devil, it is solidly based on the real world and the interests of humanity. Therefore despite the stupid attacks on communist morality by clerics, establishment philosophy professors, and assorted petty bourgeois radicals that it is cold and reduces people to the status of machines, it is quite the opposite.

Communist morality is fully human, it is based on humanity's interests and the truth, and that includes the truth of the class struggle. So our morality is in essence an active factor in the class struggle itself. To overthrow the existing order the working class needs organisation, solidarity and singleminded dedication. This is what constitutes the core of communist morality. The cultivation of these attitudes amongst the working class is therefore a weapon in overthrowing class society itself. With this in mind we guard and develop our communist morality. The stronger our communist morality, the more effective is our work, our cohesion and our power to lead the working class to storm the citadels of bourgeois power and privilege.

The Editor

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LETTERS

Ashamed

I am in receipt of your *Bulletin* No.1 of the Unemployed Workers Charter. Having read this issue it is obvious to me that you and the organisation you represent would not be welcome on a TUC or Labour Party campaign. You should be ashamed of yourselves for attempting to use the plight of the unemployed for your own propaganda machine. I note that you have not even got the guts to print which organisation you belong to.

Please keep your views and literature away from the Carnegie Centre for the Unemployed.

Yours faithfully
E Kay (Manager)
The Carnegie Centre
Workington

Mark Fischer replies:

It is not the UWC which should be "ashamed" for "attempting to use the plight of the unemployed" but you Mr E Kay and your TUC and Labour Party chums. The last Labour government saw the number of unemployed double. Now Kinnock has the nerve to try and paint his party the "party of jobs". To help in this he cynically used the Jarrow 86 marchers. Mr Kinnock and Mr Kay treat the unemployed as objects of charity. Because of this Mr Kay wants us to stay clear of 'his' charges. He doesn't want them 'corrupted' with the ideas of the UWC. Well Mr Kay we think unemployed workers in Workington have a right to make up their own minds, without patronising Labourite dictators like you interfering with their rights. In fact we think unemployed workers in Workington would be well advised to take over the running of the Carnegie Centre and do without your dubious services.

UWC demands

Thank you for the literature and bulletin of the UWC. I have been out of work for six years now and I agree fully with the demands of the UWC. I would like to become involved in the work of the UWC. I cannot send a donation yet, as I am skint at the moment, but I hope to do so in the near future.

Yours fraternally
William Richards
Co. Durham

UWC

Congratulations on your initiative of the Unemployed Workers Charter. At first I was rather sceptical, fearing that you were artificially fostering a new NUWM. However, your excellent UWC supplement in *The Leninist* projecting the idea of the unemployed workers organising themselves on the basis of the Charter, and not joining a ready made organisation, dispelled all fears.

The UWC supplement with its class struggle orientation of activating the unemployed through united action with strikers on the picket lines, in contrast and opposed to the Trot centrist 'pressure group' politics on the Labour and TU leaders, demanding that they act on behalf of the unemployed, sharply illuminates and differentiates between Trotskyism and Leninism;

the one seeking others to act on behalf of the unemployed and if they fail to do so, then they 'expose' themselves as anti-working class; the other, the Leninist concept of activating the workers to fight and organise for their own interests and by so doing invoking the fear and wrath of the Kinnocks, Benns & Co, of the workers themselves reaching

out for power, and these reformists revealing their true colours and interests in seeking to stop the workers' struggles in defence of their capitalist masters.

As you most correctly state; "To these fat cats we say, we'll go with you if you come with us, but we'll go without you if we must". This sentence sums up most concisely what our relationship must be toward the 'mass' reformist organisations and their leaders. One of the Leninist tactic of 'march separately and strike together'.

Maybe the terms of the charter could be extended to include; the right of the unemployed to full TU membership; representation as observers on strike committees where they participate in picketing; also as observers on local shop steward committees etc; in fact all means and ways, to break down the isolation of the unemployed from the arena of class struggle and to break down the barrier between employed and unemployed, so both can learn and be stimulated to action by and through contact with the other.

Whilst having reservations regarding your suggested "seat on the TUC" for the unemployed, which could mean reformist restrictions being imposed and illusions created re the value of such a seat, I consider the UWC can be a valuable step forward and pledge you all my support in your efforts.

Yours comradely
Ron Thomas
South London

Ha, ha, ha

It's a good job that I am, as you put it, one of those "people in the Labour Party with a sense of humour". Otherwise I might be just a wee bit annoyed at your comments on my contribution to the Irish debate presently taking place in *Socialist Organiser*. Come to think of it, if I didn't have a sense of humour I probably wouldn't read your publication at all.

My description of the Northern protestants as "very effective 'anti-imperialists'" (note the inverted commas — they mean irony, comrades) was intended to emphasise the simple fact that it has been they, and not the republicans, who have defeated Britain's repeated attempts to reform the Six Counties over the past eighteen years or more. I went on to argue that the commonly-held view of the protestants as simply 'pawns of British Imperialism' is untenable from a Marxist point of view (how do you explain the Anglo-Irish Accord and the protestant reaction to it, for instance?) and that Britain's continued presence in Ireland cannot be explained in terms of classic 'colonialism' or even by 'imperialism' in the usual 'highest stage' sense. But all this is A-B-C stuff, agreed upon by most serious Marxists for years. The fact that it has to be re-iterated by a humble scribe like myself, and appears to cause you some excitement, only goes to show how much of the basic theoretical groundwork hammered out by the Marxist left in Ireland and Britain in the late sixties and early seventies, has been forgotten by the present crop of vicarious Irish nationalists in Britain.

As for my supposed description of the Provisional IRA as "seriously mistaken and fundamentally sectarian", I can only say that the

Stalin school of falsification is evidently alive and well at *The Leninist*. What I actually wrote was that a particular tactic — the decision to brand all workers engaged in direct or indirect servicing of the security forces as legitimate targets — was mistaken and sectarian. How would you describe such an ultimatum directed at around 20 per cent of the total Six Counties workforce?

Yours in solidarity,
Jim Denham
Birmingham

P.S. I was pleased to note that the item immediately following your comments on my Irish article was a little piece concerning Ferdinand Mount's assessment of Neil Kinnock — lifted almost word for word from my *Press Gang* column in *Socialist Organiser*. Glad to be of service, comrades!

David Sherriff replies:
We are not in the least bit interested in making a contribution to your pathetic debate in *Socialist Organiser*. How you adapt to Labourism is your squalid business. But we would agree that to be a SO supporter you do have to have a sense of humour. After all *Socialist Organiser* believes the Labour Party (the bourgeois party of the working class — Lenin) can be transformed. What a joke. But it is a sick one. For it means SO has to hate everything which is not Labourite. It hates the Soviet Union and all socialist countries, anti-imperialist movements like the IRA, PLO and ANC, and of course the Communist Party. On the protestant working class question. They are not 'simply' pawns, true. But so what, we have never thought so. But Britain's continued presence can most definitely be explained in terms of capitalism at its highest stage (see our supplements on Ireland in Nos 13, 14, 15). It certainly has nothing to do with bowing to the wishes of the protestant working class, their 'anti-imperialism' as Denham only half jokingly implies or as his Labourite academic 'Marxists' have been saying for years.

P.S. As to Ferdinand Mount. We would very much hope we used the same words as you did in your column. After all, we were both quoting him.

Joining

I would like your advice: after having been inactive for quite some while, previously having worked with the RCP, I am now considering joining the CPGB. As you will understand that is not because I am so impressed with their politics, but rather to make my own small contribution towards promoting Leninism inside the Party.

I am well aware of your level of commitment, and I have to tell you straight away that for the foreseeable future I won't be able to be a formal member of your group. But I want my activities within the Party to be informed and guided by a somewhat more formalised contact with yourselves, if you think that would be useful.

With communist greetings
Mike Keays
Coventry

Note: Letters have been shortened due to lack of space. For political security we have changed names and addresses, and certain details.



WRITE TO:
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STRAIGHT BIGOT?



COMRADE Nick Wright, a long standing Communist Party member and Straight Leftist, is an employee of Haringey Council's Police Committee. *The Guardian* carried a rather murky photo of him showing his involvement in an unfortunate incident.

Haringey council encountered the wrath of the yellow press and from various shades of reactionaries, when it decided to stock the book *Jenny lives with Eric and John* in its school libraries. This book attempted to portray homosexuals in a relaxed and non-discriminatory way for the consumption of children.

The response to Haringey's decision to use this innocuous publication in its schools illustrates what levels of intensity the backlash against gay and lesbian rights is reaching in this country. Questions were asked in the House, the gutter rags had a field day and the hysteria thus engendered looked set to justify still further attacks on the fragile positions of lesbians and gays.

On the night that the council were to debate the controversy over the book, gay activists and their supporters called for a lobby to pressure the council to uphold its position of support for the presentation of positive images of gays in the borough's schools. A counter-picket by a very dubious organisation called 'Parents Against Perverts' was called and the evening ended in clashes between the two sets of demonstrators.

Communists, if they are to be worthy of that name, must be the most intransigent and militant defenders of democratic rights and thus should have been standing alongside those gay and lesbian activists demanding that the council did not give in to the bigots. Yet *The Guardian* photographed comrade Nick Wright apparently wading in against a gay on the lobby.

We contacted Nick to allow him to put his side of the story and clarify his attitude on the whole question of gay and lesbian rights. Sadly, comrade Wright chose to pass up this opportunity. When we put it to Nick that the photo did indeed put him in a rather unfortunate position

as a communist. He made it clear that he either didn't think so, or didn't care:

Nick Wright: I'm as indifferent to your interest in this matter as I am to what the bourgeois press wrote.

The Leninist: So do you have any comment at all to make on the incident? Do you for example have any views as a communist on Haringey Council's policy of introducing literature into schools that portray homosexuals and lesbians in a favourable light?

Nick Wright: Write down what I just said. I am as indifferent to what The Leninist thinks as I am to what the bourgeois press say.

The Leninist: Well, the bourgeois press didn't actually say anything, Nick. What they did have, and what we plan to reproduce is a photo of you apparently 'wading in' against a gay protester.

Nick Wright: Then for the word 'say' you can substitute the word 'depict'. If you want to talk about Haringey council's policy I'd advise you to ring the Press and Publicity department.

The Leninist: We are trying to speak to you as an individual communist rather than as an employee of Haringey council.

Nick Wright: Well I am as indifferent to what you say and think and write as I am to what the bourgeois press says, thinks and writes and I have nothing else to say to you.

The Leninist: But wouldn't you like an opportunity to clarify your position on this matter, comrade Wright? After all, this photo could be open to rather unfortunate interpretation.

Apparently, comrade Wright did not want to clarify his position as this was the moment he chose to slam the phone down on us. Undaunted, we tried to pin him down from another angle.

Brian Topping, since his expulsion from the Party has become the credited editor of the now open Straight Leftist broadsheet, *Communist*. He was more polite than comrade Wright, but equally as unforthcoming about what he thought of the issue of gay and lesbian rights:

Brian Topping: ... I read your

This photo of comrade Nick Wright (right) surely poses important questions. After all it shows him apparently wading in against a gay on the side of reactionaries. As a communist, surely comrade Wright should either have been on the picket alongside the gay activists and their supporters, or if that had been impossible due to the nature of his Police Committee work he should have simply stayed away altogether. What it seems to us however, is that comrade Wright was there to 'police' the meeting on the part of his employers and at best did not differentiate between the two groups of protesters, or at worst used his position to indulge in a little bit of 'queer bashing' on the sly. However, all of this is speculation. Why not write and tell us what you were doing that night comrade Wright?

publication with some interest, but I don't want to get into an interview with you on this or any other issue really.

We asked if it was possible to get an unattributable quote which would make clear the attitude of *Communist* on this important topic and were told, "I don't think so, no." We then asked if we could be referred to even one article in *Communist* which outlined their attitude to the question we were again told "No".

We made clear to Brian that we did not want to talk about the general politics of *Communist* despite having followed its evolution quite closely in its various forms: all we were after was a simple statement, a clarification of the stance of this open communist publication on the issue of gay and lesbian rights.

Brian unfortunately, decided to pass up the opportunity just as comrade Wright had. "I don't want to be uncomradely, but I'm not really prepared to discuss the question any further."

For us it is the duty of communists to stand full square with the oppressed and to educate the working class to take up their cause. The proletariat if it is to become the ruling class must make itself the hegemon of all the struggles of the oppressed in capitalist society.

The Bolsheviks are a fine example of the fundamental humanity and democracy of revolutionary Marxism. The old repressive legislation which made homosexuality punishable by long prison sentences was scrapped. Lenin and his party took their lead from Bebel's authoritative work *Women and Socialism* which made clear that for Marxists "The satisfaction of the sexual impulse is everyone's private affair just like the satisfaction of any other natural impulse."

Perhaps the reason why some in the SL camp do not want to discuss this matter openly is the same reason why they do not want to discuss any matter openly: because this faction is one that is built on sand. Political discussion in the ranks of Straight Leftism is frowned on as it would inevitably lead to a left/right schism in this conservative block.

October's edition of *Communist*, the bi-monthly of the Straight Leftist "we're not a faction" faction, reports on problems being experienced by comrade Tony McNally, the District Secretary in the Midlands. According to *Communist* the Midlands District Committee is experiencing "serious difficulties". Firstly, it has been unable to fill the important position of Coventry and Warwickshire Area Secretary which has now been vacant for several months. No Eurocommunist is willing to do the job on the wage being offered. The full-time post of Birmingham City Secretary has also not been taken up for the same reason. The last comrade to hold the post, Pete Achers, resigned because of financial reasons as did his predecessor, comrade Pete Shepard. Secondly, the Coventry membership had exacerbated comrade McNally's worries about finance by refusing to accept the sale of their rooms (valued "conservatively" at £80,000) unless they are given a guarantee that new, even if they are cheaper, premises are bought. Attempts to get the sale District Committee official policy were stymied at the September meeting when a "normally pro-leadership" member walked out of the meeting in order to leave it iniquitous. Thirdly, despite taking disciplinary action against three branch secretaries in the Coventry Area following the 39th Congress, Straight Leftists in the area continue to be a thorn in his side.

Comrade Gordon McLennan is boasting about the number of centre and right Labour politicians, including ex-Party member and now Cold War warrior Denis Healey, attending the Left Unlimited event. Our General Secretary believes this development opens up exciting possibilities "if only we all move in that direction". From reports we are receiving most Party members seem unwilling to junk their communism for the sake of respectability in the eyes of a few Labourite big wigs. Left Unlimited was attended by 3,000 of the so-called realigned left, according to the organisers. While the Jarrow 86 marchers rallied in Trafalgar Square *Marxism Today* staged debates on pop music and fashion.

The communist Party in Scotland held its congress over November 1-2. Jack Ashton, secretary of the Scottish committee, reported membership had declined by about a quarter over the last two years. In 1984 membership was 3,700; now it is 2,900. And indicating that the decline of the Party is qualitative as well as quantitative comrade Ashton admitted only 1,554 copies of *7 Days* were sold in Scotland.

The Communist Party of Turkey — Worker's Voice has nearly completed its 10th Self Sacrifice Campaign. All the Party's organisations and supporters in Turkey, Britain, Federal Germany, France, Sweden and elsewhere will be taking part. The aim is to raise £100,000 — all within six weeks — by taking extra jobs, taking collections amongst workers, selling possessions. Even comrades in prison will be giving their all to the campaign by selling rations and making objects to be sold. Readers of *The Leninist* are urged to do their bit and send donations to: İçin Sesi, PO Box 513, London N16 5QB.

FOLLOW THEIR LEAD

Some readers have responded to our call for a regular standing order to help finance *The Leninist*. A former RCP supporter from Coventry has pledged £15 a month, an NGA member in London has doubled her contribution and perhaps most pleasingly, angered by Kinnock's refusal to give a commitment to restore the £100 million social security benefits snatched from those under 25 by the Tories, a group of five young unemployed workers have clubbed together and promised us £10 a month. "This is our answer to scab Kinnock and his worries about what the system can afford" they declared. Indeed it is, and it is a splendid example for all our readers. Standing at £291.65 last edition, we have had another £190 in, so we need another £188.55 by the end of the month in order to reach our £600 monthly target. Do your bit, fill in this form.

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NO ONE who attended the Jarrow 86 demonstration in London on November 2 would doubt the sincerity of the marchers. But we must question the sincerity of the organisers given their attitude towards the unemployed themselves and the fact that Jarrow 86 was modelled on and designed to commemorate the Jarrow Crusade of 1936.

The Jarrow Crusade was kept, in the words of Ellen Wilkinson, Jarrow's Labour MP in 1936, "irreproachably non-political". Despite this the Labour Party and the TUC refused their support. This was because they were determined to be seen not to have any association whatsoever with the militancy of the unemployed organised in the communist-led National Unemployed Workers' Movement.

In spite of the way the bourgeois media publicised the Jarrow Crusade, contrasted it favourably against the NUWM's Hunger Marches from Scotland, Wales, Cumberland, Durham and Yorkshire when it arrived in London it was greeted with a Communist Party-mobilised 50,000 strong demonstration.

Yet the Jarrow Crusade organisers had themselves turned down the offer made by Wal Hannington (the leader of the NUWM) to make the Jarrow Crusade a leg of the NUWN's own massive Hunger March of that year. They wanted to rouse "public opinion in England to the plight of Jarrow". Hence they staged a highly repeatable begging bowl march for Jarrow alone, not for the unemployed as a whole. As a result of this class collaborationism it was given massive and very sympathetic publicity by the popular press.

No wonder Kinnock and Willis felt safe with the Jarrow Crusade as the model for Jarrow 86. After all, all they wanted to do was to use the unemployed as cannon fodder to enhance the Labour Party's pre-election propaganda.

As planned Jarrow 86 got a good deal of publicity for Kinnock and the Labour Party and being committed to the election of the 'next Labour government' it was hardly surprising the organisers of Jarrow 86 did not for one moment address themselves to the task of actually organising the unemployed. The "high profile" Jarrow 86 roadshow rolled into town and then rolled out, often unnoticed by the unemployed themselves, let alone the mass of ordinary people.

Jarrow 86 Ltd was not even interested in unemployed workers being brought together to mobilise for the November 2 demonstration in London. Everything was in the hands of the Walworth Road bureaucracy, respectable trade union officials and expense account Labour Party councillors. Everything was for 'the next Labour government' and the consumption of the media.

Results

The results of this approach were seen in the numbers who were mobilised for the Hyde Park to Trafalgar Square stage of Jarrow 86 on November 2. While the *Morning Star* reported "thousands flocked to London's Trafalgar Square to give the marchers a rousing reception" (November 3, 1986) the facts were less impressive. True thousands did take part in the final leg of the march, but only about 3,000—a pathetic contrast to the 50,000 who greeted the original Jarrow Crusade, let alone the 200,000 who turned out for the Hunger March of the same year.

This poor turnout was guaranteed by the complete absence of campaigning work by the official movement. It did not advertise the demonstration in the left press, (which in turn often did not even publicise the place or time of the demonstration). Certainly nothing was done to organise the distribution of leaflets outside dole offices, let alone coaches or trains from Glasgow, the North East, South Wales, Merseyside, and other areas of acute unemployment.

In fact the job of mobilising the unemployed fell to the Unemployed Workers Charter. Its posters were pasted all along the route of Jarrow 86 and in all the working class areas of London itself, its leaflets and broadsheets were distributed at dole offices calling for the unemployed to greet the Jarrow marchers on November 2, and only the UWC fought for unemployed workers' centres to use the Jarrow 86 march as an opportunity to raise the whole question of organising the unemployed.

But why was there a failure to mobilise for November 2? The answer does not just lie in the bungling ineptitude of Norman Willis and the TUC headquarters. No, it lies in the reformist politics of the official labour movement, which are by definition unashamedly electoral and respectable.

The Labour Party leadership knows Thatcher's record on unemployment is indefensible. Hence they have pinned their chances at the

next general election on exploiting it. To help Kinnock in his progress to No. 10 they cynically used the Jarrow 86 marchers and their hatred of Thatcher as a cheap source of PR. With the help of virtually all the left press, including the *Morning Star*, *News Line*, *Militant*, *Workers Press* and *7 Days* the marchers were in fact turned into pawns in a marketing strategy to cultivate the image of "the party of jobs" for Labour.

Of course for forms sake the Jarrow 86 publicity material said the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the Jarrow Crusade would be used to "actively campaign for the unemployed of the 1980s." But this did not include building an unemployed workers' organisation. The plain fact is that the official labour movement fears unemployed workers like the plague and will do everything to ensure they do not organise themselves.

The unemployed have nothing to loose but their chains. What crumbs do they enjoy from imperialism's table? Even now the unemployed are in the main totally cynical about reformist polities and it's worth. Organised they would be hard to control. Organised they would have little time for the niceties of Labourite politics and the public school style debates on unemployment in the House of Commons. Organised the unemployed would demand what they and their families need for a decent life not what the system can afford, they would demand the right to work or full maintenance. In other words organised the unemployed would gravitate towards revolutionary politics.

UWC militants found this to be particularly true of black youth. They have no stake in the system, they feel utterly alienated from it. Far from identifying with the official labour movement and the stuffy parliamentarianism of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition they look to the struggle in South Africa for inspiration and example.

Keeping politics out

In light of Toxteth, Brixton, Tottenham and St Pauls the official labour movement did its best to keep Jarrow 86 low key and safe. With their comfortable middle class existence, their fat expense accounts and their heads full of sub clauses and class compromise the trade union bureaucracy instinctively knows they could not control the unemployed.

Thus on the November 2 demonstration not only was official mobilisation confined to respectable trade unionists but the platform in Hyde Park patronisingly and insultingly called upon demonstrators (presumably the unrespectable ones like the unemployed) "not to drink cans of lager along the route".

More sinisterly "with police agreement" placards were banned, naturally CPSA and T&G placards turned up and naturally the UWC broke the ban and its 'Organise the Unemployed' placards dominated the demonstration and were carried by most sections above all the unemployed themselves. But not content with this ploy to keep out unofficial politics the chief steward announced there would be no slogans chanted on the march.

Far from this being because of the "marchers wishes" it was another attempt to keep out unofficial ie revolutionary politics. Justifying this it was announced that they wanted a "dignified march", by which they meant a funeral march which having reached its destination would be preached at by the vicars of Labourism.

By keeping the demonstration silent the organisers hoped to allow Labourism to go unchallenged. Silence signifies humility and an acceptance of official politics. Once even an innocuous slogan is shouted, it invites criticism and therefore political clarification, it engenders collectivism and can quickly shift from 'Maggie, Maggie, Maggie, out, out, out' to 'The workers united will never be defeated—organise the unemployed'.

The unemployed are angry, and not just with the Tories. They do not want sympathy, they want to fight. With this understanding the UWC broke the ban on slogans, and its militant 'Organise, Mobilise — Smash the YTS' and 'Right to Work — Now' slogans rang out loud and clear all the way from Hyde Park to Trafalgar Square.

The Arch Bishop of the TUC, Norman Willis, was the first to preach at Trafalgar Square. Given the TUC's treacherous role in the miners' Great Strike, its failure to support the News International Printers, its refusal to organise the unemployed and not least its backing of the YTS the UWC led the chant of 'scab, scab, scab' against him. While respectable Labourites objected to this disrespect for the TUC religion, unemployed workers, printers and genuine militants joined in the chanting until the scab had finished his sermon

UNEMPLOYMENT FIGHT

of 'the next Labour government' putting Britain back to work.

In fact while many gathered in Trafalgar Square wanted to fight unemployment the organisers could only offer the sermon of 'next Labour government', which speaker after speaker assured us would solve the unemployment problem. Of course as *The Leninist* and the UWC have pointed out there is no reason to believe that if Kinnock was sitting pretty in No. 10 things would really improve for the unemployed. After all the last Labour government doubled unemployment and today Labour is equally committed to managing the capitalist system.

Because this system is decadent and decaying it dooms millions of workers to the living death of unemployment. All Labour's promises about overcoming unemployment, or merely creating a million jobs within two years of being elected rest on its ability to restore the profitability and competitiveness of British bosses. And in the real world increasing profitability rests on replacing yet more workers by machines and again, just as the last Labour government did, trying to force down real wages.

The fact is that Britain has inexorably declined over the last 50 years at least. More than that today capitalism is at the peak of its business cycle. So if truth be told all the fancy plans Labour has announced about a massive increase in public spending to boost the

domestic economy would be unceremoniously jacked with the first run of the pound or stock market downturn.

Those, like the organisers of Jarrow 86, who insist that "Labour has the will to solve the twin evils of mass unemployment and social deprivation" that all we have to do is to vote Labour at the next general election, are simply perpetrating a cruel con trick on the unemployed.



BLOYED BACK

ite correctly in the light of capitalism's seemingly intractable problem of permanent mass unemployment the left calls for socialist planning. This is indeed the only way to do away with unemployment. The Soviet Union abolished unemployment with its first five year plan. Some point to the inefficiency that there is in the Soviet Union which means there often exists overmanning. Yet alongside such overmanning there are also serious labour shortages, so even with far from perfect socialist planning unemployment can be quickly abolished.

It is said there are none so blind as those who will not see. Unfortunately most of the left in Britain has inflicted upon itself not only blindness but deafness to boot. The fact is that the left can only see socialist planning coming

through a Labour government. To believe this, or at least to say one believes this, necessitates ignoring what Kinnock has the honesty to admit — the 'next Labour government' will manage capitalism, it will not challenge capitalism nor the power and wealth of the capitalists.

Thus we can read in the *Morning Star* the following amazing piece of self delusion: "a mass movement must be mobilised to not only win a Labour government committed to policies that put people before profit but to defend that government as it storms the commanding heights" (November 3).

Why engage in such palpable nonsense? Surely as Labour under Kinnock makes no pretence of ushering in socialism or even far reaching reform, there can be no excuse for fostering hopes in the 'next Labour government'.

So why do it? The answer is simple. The vast majority of left groups today have lost any vision of revolution ever happening in Britain. Their theoretical weaknesses of the 1960s has born Labourite fruit in the 1980s. They have become mesmerised by Labourism, enmeshed in Labourism and in the final analysis loyal to Labourism. For them the role of revolutionary



organisations has been reduced to pressurising Labourism, they have long given up all idea of replacing Labourism.

This dooms them all to tailism and as day follows night it leads to a denial of the necessity of the working class seizing state power, and establishing its own dictatorship. And if you deny that all your talk of abolishing unemployment through socialist planning is not worth a brass farthing. For the fact is that only through revolution does socialist planning become possible, and only through socialist planning is ending unemployment possible.

What these truths tell us, is that the fight against unemployment must have an explicitly anti-capitalist content. Only by ending capitalism itself can unemployment be made a thing of the past. And to be consistent and honest this leads, and must lead, to opposing Labourite promises about managing capitalism in the interests of the working class.

The ghosts of Sidney Webb, Stafford Cripps and George Brown haunts all who peddle the line of 'socialist planning' under capitalism, the living ghosts of the socialist promises by Labour-type governments in Australia, Spain and Greece hangs like a spectre over those who say socialism will come through pressuring Kinnock into taking 'progressive measures', and the ghost of the 'next Labour government' is already promising austerity, mass unemployment and a host of anti-working class measures.

Because of this we are forced to warn unemployed workers against the left which promises hope in the 'next Labour government'. It provides a radical cover for the rightism of Kinnock and even more damningly looks to the capitalist state itself as the medium of their 'socialist project'.

This reliance on the capitalist state is also why we have said the Eurocommunist, CCG, NCP and Straight Leftists friends of the Labour Party are objectively little different from Kinnock's left Labourites. Their faith in the socialist potential the Labour Party ties them to the capitalist state, its parliament, laws and democracy and thus to the very system they claim to oppose and therefore to the continuation of one of its inevitable features — unemployment.

We have no such problems. We stand for the smashing of the capitalist state. This means *The Leninist* could sponsor the setting up of the UWC as a militant campaign to organise the unemployed along definite anti-capitalist lines. For us the whole of working class history proves that nothing permanent can be gained unless the working class seizes state power. All reforms, which are by their very nature temporary, like improved living standards, liberties and democratic rights, have to be wrung from the ruling class by the organised strength and action of the workers.

Certainly when unemployment reaches 3 million plus according to official figures and 4 million according to unofficial figures and increases from year to year, despite fiddling the figures 18 times, YTS and cheap labour schemes; the organisation of the unemployed in an anti-capitalist offensive becomes an imperative necessity.

Of course the task of organising the unemployed is not a simple one. The unemployed are atomised, often dispirited and most of those under 25 (who make up around 50% of the unemployed) have little or no experience of working class or any disciplined organisation. Nonetheless the unemployed are burning to fight. True their anger is often misdirected but it can be harnessed if the will to do so is there.

The UWC does not for one moment project itself as the national unemployed workers' organisation. It is the campaign for such an organisation. But we do not just see the UWC as a vehicle for propaganda. It exists as a nucleus for a national unemployed workers' organisation. We aim, therefore, to set up UWC groups in all towns and cities and draw together unemployed workers organised in unemployed centres into a national network which can found a mighty unemployed workers' movement.

NUWM

For this perspective we have the example of the National Unemployed Workers' Movement which rallied up to 100,000 to join its ranks in the 1920s and 30s. The NUWM was not respectable. It organised factory raids to stop excessive overtime work, it occupied buildings from which to organise the unemployed, it fought side by side with workers in struggle not least the heroic miners of 1926. Above all the NUWM was revolutionary and explicitly anti-capitalist.

This, and even its determination to stand by the unemployed, led to the NUWM having a stormy relationship with the official labour

movement. Yet far from being against the official movement as such all the NUWM asked for was allowing the unemployed to have some say in the official movement and for the official movement to aid the NUWM in its struggle for the rights of the unemployed against the government.

That the TUC and Labour Party bureaucracy refused to countenance this not only harmed the interests of the unemployed, it also weakened the fighting power of the working class as a whole and made it prey to class collaborationist ideology and wage cutting.

While a real fightback against unemployment necessitates taking into account the official movement it also necessitates standing against its conservatism and crass faith in the reformability of the capitalist system. There certainly can be no truck with TUC support for YTS schemes nor its use of unemployed workers to get Neil Kinnock into No.10. What is needed is an approach which can combine in a flexible way unofficial initiatives with the revolutionising of the official institution.

A good example of this is the unemployed centres. Trade union officialdom has decreed these centres should in essence be nothing more than non-political tea and sympathy drop-ins run by appointees. Yet necessity demands that the unemployed have centres from which to organise themselves. Should we ignore the unemployed centres — definitely not. Should we meekly accept the ban on politics — definitely not.

So what should be done? We say the unemployed must take what is theirs. They must run the unemployed centres and turn them into centres to organise and mobilise the unemployed: with the centre workers if possible, without them if needs be. (And if centres are not available the unemployed must demand off local councils rent free premises for their purposes, with no if and no buts).

The UWC has no interest whatsoever in isolating the unemployed workers from employed workers like many trade union big wigs. The UWC will campaign to mobilise the unemployed alongside all workers in struggle. To facilitate this the UWC says local unemployed workers organisations must have representatives with full voting rights on trade councils and a national unemployed workers movement should have a seat on the TUC.

What next?

Already the UWC has made its mark. Its petition has over 10,000 signatures and from the four corners of Britain unemployed workers are wanting to become UWC supporters. And we have ambitious plans for the UWC. The YTS scheme is slave labour and the official movement must be persuaded to end all cooperation with it. In fact the UWC will mobilise a mighty protest to force the government to concede to the demands of the unemployed. The UWC says: "Real training — yes! Slave labour no!"

The Department of Employment admits that despite dragooning 314,384 onto YTS schemes and 240,000 onto community programmes it expects unemployment will remain above three million till at least 1990. In the absence of serious opposition the Tories are using naked intimidation in order to get the numbers claiming benefit down before the general election. The UWC says: "Claiming benefit is a right — end all harrassment!"

Against this attack the UWC looks to action in the here and now. It does not want to hold back the anger of the unemployed let alone offer the dubious prospect of 'the next Labour government'. Whichever party comes to office unemployment cannot be ended without ending capitalism. And capitalism has not and cannot be ended by a parliamentary vote.

We have all read establishment economic predictions of a new economic downturn coming within the next couple or so years, this adds urgency to the task of organising resistance to more sackings, more youth unemployment and more attacks on the rights and living conditions of the unemployed.

As the official labour movement refuses to organise the unemployed the UWC will take up the challenge. Of course far from being sectional the UWC supports the right of unemployed workers to be full members of their appropriate trade union but it recognises this can be no substitute for an national unemployed workers movement. After all as shown by Jarrow 86 the official labour movement only pays lip service to plight of the unemployed.

Jack Conrad

If you want to join the UWC or distribute its publicity material — phone Mark Fischer on 01-431 3135, or write to BCM Box 928, London WC1N 3XX.

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TEACHERS

As we go to press most teachers' unions want to accept the Labour Party dominated employers' offer. The unions argue it is better than waiting for Baker and the government imposing a settlement. How should the rank and file respond? We lay down some basic principles.

Those rigorous polemicists of the international Spartacist tendency have been mauling us again. Their "new format" October issue (a year's free subscription and a paper hat for the first punter to spot the difference with the old format), "creams" us for our line on Ireland. The Sparts pooh-pooh the idea that there is a revolutionary situation in the Six Counties and claim that we in The Leninist are a bit promiscuous with our definitions of "revolutionary situations". For example, Turkey throughout the 1970s according to these learned Trots was not convulsed by a revolutionary crisis; but then in the same breath they go on to claim that the Turkish bourgeoisie imposed in 1980 a "counter-revolutionary" coup.

When is a popular front, not a popular front? When it is run by the R... R... Revolutionary Communist Party. After quite rightly attacking the moth-eaten SWP for its championing of the Anti-Nazi League, with its vicars, TV personalities and liberals, back in the 1970s, the RCP now boasts of its cooperation with the Bremen Green Party in Federal Germany and even their adoption of a joint manifesto.

Christmas is creeping up on us again, dear readers. It is an expensive time of course, with presents to buy, booze to stock up on and heaps of victuals to pack away. This year, what with the deepening crisis of British imperialism, every one of us may find it particularly hard making ends meet. So why not do what one of our sympathisers did recently, why not claim a refund from Proletarian for that as yet undelivered (as yet unwritten?) No.3 of their journal. Our sympathiser did indeed get her money back, which seems to indicate that the appearance of said publication is still some way off.

"The Chilean Stalinists are desperate to head off the gathering mass movement against the regime and steer it into token protests. They have been particularly alarmed by the activities of the Manuel Rodriguez Patriotic Front, which claimed responsibility for the recent attempt to assassinate Pinochet." (News Line October 17, 1986) We had the impression that the Chilean comrades set up the MRPF and it is Communist Party members who make up its members.

TEACHERS IN STRUGGLE

THERE ARE those, like Max Adereth in the *Communist Campaign Review*, who foolishly declared that teachers are "not part of the working class". Idiotically they reduce the working class down to productive workers like miners and steelworkers and consign all unproductive workers like social security clerks and bank workers to other classes.

Adereth and his co-thinkers are incapable of understanding that teachers are not only working class but their labour helps, albeit indirectly, to produce surplus value. Indeed whether the CCG boneheads admit it or not teachers have been proletarianised long ago and as can be seen with their drawn out dispute they are slowly being forced to fight in a proletarian way.

After drifting for some months the teacher's dispute went back into top gear, when at the end of October education secretary Kenneth Baker directly intervened to stop the whole thing dragging on and on till the next general election. Unless the teachers accept the 16.4% offer over two years, with compulsory contracts of employment, Baker has suggested that the Renumeration of Teachers Act governing their pay might be repealed, and in its place a new act would be pushed through parliament which would impose a settlement.

With the leadership of the NUT doing its best to hold the Coventry deal together and its members voting to throw it out Baker's take it or leave it package was designed to pressure the English and Welsh unions in the direction of a quick settlement.

Baker hoped that with the threat of parliamentary legislation the unions south of the border would quickly buckle and the Scottish EIS would in due course fall in line.

The government's intervention has, it must be said, backfired. Coming only days before the English and Welsh employers and unions were to meet in Nottingham, seemingly only to cross the T's and dot the I's, the government's move threw the cat amongst the pigeons in no uncertain fashion.

Under the Baker package, in return for an average of 16.4% on pay over two years, teachers working conditions are to be written into a binding contract. Baker wants to divide and rule. Therefore while the best paid teachers — those like heads of departments with both feet on a middle class career structure leading to headships — would get a higher differential, the rest of teachers — the vast mass who are definitely working class — would at

the end of the day get £2,000 less than on offer at Coventry. These teachers would lose even more rights under the Baker package than the employers were asking at Coventry.

In fact Baker has simply taken what the unions were prepared to give away at Coventry and tighten them up, made them more binding. At Coventry the employers did at least accept the need to meet the unions half way on certain issues. For example they agreed to a maximum class size but the Baker package will land teachers with classes with no maximum size.

The same approach can be seen on the thorny issue of 'cover'. Baker says his package will give secondary school teachers 'non-contact' time to prepare lessons but in practice they will not have it because of his contractual obligation to cover for absent teachers.

Primary teachers fear they will fare even worse under Baker than secondary teachers for they will be given no 'non-contact' time. It seems possible that they will be contracted to work a seven hour day then be expected to do their preparation at home or attend meetings.

Conditions

Before the NUT entered talks under the auspices of Acas in the summer the union leadership claimed it would protect its members' working conditions. Yet by entering these talks where working conditions were already up for auction this pledge was bound to be broken simply given the logic of the negotiations.

If the NUT had, as many militants argued, refused to take part in the Acas talks, then the draft 'nineteen points' which have become the benchmark for all subsequent attempts to impose a rigid contract on teachers would never have been killed at birth. Certainly the employers, and then Baker, saw the NUT's concessions on conditions, its willingness to sell them in return for money as their chance to shift the centre of debate from the fact that teachers are low paid to whether or not they should be contractually obliged to do dinner duties.

The outcome of the Scottish teachers dispute hangs to quite a large degree on the outcome in England and Wales. Nonetheless it would be fatal for Scottish teachers simply to passively await developments south of the border. The Main Report covering teachers pay and conditions in Scotland presents Scottish teachers with a threat to their rights and conditions greater than the Coventry deal agreed by the NUT leadership.



Militant teachers don't want to sell conditions — they want to fight

Main was chaired by a former director of Boots and its committee consisted of big businessmen, the only member who was directly concerned with education was a nun who was also a head teacher at a Catholic school. Its conclusions were decidedly anti-working class. In return for a pay rise, which would represent a real loss of pay since the mid-1970s, Main proposes to close schools to save money, broaden the grounds for sacking teachers and make those on short term contracts ineligible for being made permanent.

As if this were not enough assessment would become the norm and would be extended to every sphere of school life. This is an anti-militancy device. The power of the head would be tremendously increased and it would mean militant teachers would be under a constant pressure to toe their line. Employers in England and Wales have taken their cue from this anti-militancy clause in the Main Report and are already drawing up their own version in order to deal with troublesome staff.

Not surprisingly opposition to Main has been widespread. Virtually all areas have voted against it, Glasgow EIS by a massive majority of 800. It was this rank and file groundswell which forced the 'left' EIS leadership, which had been leaning towards acceptance, into coming out against the deal and recommending a 'no' vote in its ballot.

Unfortunately as in the NUT militants in the EIS were unwilling to link up on an all-Britain rank and file basis. They lacked the confidence to act independently of the leadership and escalate the whole dispute. In fact many leftwingers, because of their faith in official structures, went along with the call by Fred Jarvis, NUT general secretary, to involve the backstabbing TUC in bringing together teachers unions. Indeed such is the faith in officialdom many also supported the call to set up an 'independent review' to look into teachers pay, even though such bodies have never given teachers what they need.

The left

The Local Association Pay Action Conference which unites leftwing NUT branches meeting in early November continued to illustrate the weakness of the NUT left. While on the positive side it was agreed to improve links with the Scottish teachers in the EIS and college lecturers in NATFE and lobby the

Nottingham talks that was about all that was decided.

Given the crucial stage of the struggle such lethargy could prove fatal. Attack, attack should have been the motto. Talk of exam boycotts and unofficial strike action were all left in mid air. This leaves the initiative with the union bureaucracy and if Baker steps in with a parliamentary act surely it will not have the bottle to fight.

The key to opposing any sell out agreement will rest on the ability of the rank and file to organise unofficial industrial action. While there has been unofficial action, for example in Leicester, this has remained isolated. This is in no small part due to the retreat of NUT leftists to the right.

This was well illustrated when leading SWP members at the LAPAC meeting even queried the idea of writing to every school to call for action because it was either impossible or too expensive. Of course this puts the SWP behind the left reformist EIS leadership — after all they did exactly this as part of their campaign. The remaining influence of such SWP 'militants' must be an important factor behind the disarray in the rank of teachers.

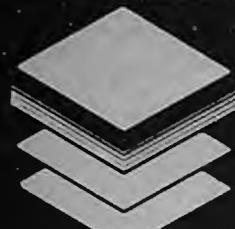
Nonetheless the will to fight is there. Edinburgh EIS has called for strike action one day each week against Main. With even the moderate NAS/UWT calling half day strikes it is quite possible for a head of steam to be built up. But this will require the downturn SWPers and conservative Socialist Teachers Alliance being forced aside by a genuine fighting rank and file leadership.

If teachers are defeated it will affect all other local government unions. If the government imposes a deal on teachers it will undoubtedly go on to do the same to other workers. Already hints have been let drop about lecturers suffering the same fate.

The Tory's are out to batter the teachers' unions so they can launch a full scale attack on teachers and education for the working class. The NUT, NAS/UWT and EIS bureaucracies cannot lead a fightback. But there is no choice. It is either fightback or surrender to the rotten selling of conditions and open the way to a massive government offensive. Arguing for a return to strike action will be difficult but there is no alternative.

Militants must organise throughout Britain. Rank and file, joint union committees should be established and a real fightback begun.

Tony Coughlin



BOOKS

Genocidal Maoism

Irwin Sibler, Kampuchea: The Revolution Rescued, Line of March Publications, pp.148, \$7.95.

VIETNAMESE troops entered Phnom Penh, the Kampuchean capital, on January 7 1979. This signalled the removal by a communist party government of one workers' state, Vietnam, of its fraternal party in Kampuchea by force of arms. Sibler's book sets out to defend the actions of the Vietnamese comrades and provide an analysis of the questions of Marxist theory raised by them, as well as being an informative account of the affair.

Both Ho Chi Minh and Pol Pot are traceable back to the same party, the Indochinese Communist Party, formed by Ho Chi Minh at the

instigation of the Comintern in 1930, uniting the communists of Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos against French colonialism in the region. Because of the development of the anti-colonial struggle along the lines of nationality the ICP was dissolved into three parties between 1950-51; the Vietnamese Workers' Party, Kampuchean Peoples' Revolutionary Party and Laos Peoples' Revolutionary Party. Initially, of course, the three worked in close coordination. However, a trend represented by Pol Pot came under the influence of Maoist ideology. On their return to Cambodia this began to manifest itself in an explicitly nationalist and anti-Vietnamese form. This became a force to be reckoned with on Pol Pot's election to the KPRP Central Committee in 1960, and with the KPRP's name change to the Kampuchean Communist Party in 1966 the Pol Pot trend was dominant in the Party.

On seizing power in 1975 through the guerrilla war of the Khmer Rouge the KCP started an aggressive series of border raids against socialist Vietnam — raids which were continued throughout the lifetime of the Pol Pot regime — using the spurious excuse that the Vietnamese were 'regional hegemonists' and had annexed sometime in their ancient past sections of the Khmer people. In their claims on Vietnamese territory the KCP and its newly

butter' issues.

He praises the Belfast docks strike of 1907 when such unity was achieved but makes no big thing of the fact that it was followed by pogroms on Catholic workers carried out by the same Protestant workers who had so recently stood shoulder to shoulder with them on the picket line. Bambrey also cites other examples of this much sought after 'unity', all of which ended in a similar fashion. Unity has been maintained just so long as it does not encroach on the privileged position of the loyalists. When it does the Protestant workers have on every occasion reacted to preserve the link with Britain by hitting out at those who challenge it. Any movement which does not take into account the dominance of the national question in Ireland in practice is doomed to failure.

When he gets around to discussing the tasks of the revolutionary movement in Ireland Bambrey ends up in even more of a mess. Here his illusions in the simple capital/labour contradiction come even further to the fore. Bambrey tries to define his and the SWP's position by what it is against. The first opponent is the Communist Party of Ireland, and with all due crusading vigour he hurtles in against 'Stalin's stages theory of revolution'. According to this the first stage was to secure 'bourgeois democracy' in both Irish states. Stage two would be to achieve a united capitalist Ireland. The final, third stage would be the achievement of socialism. This meant that socialist demands which fitted 'stage three' could not be raised at a time when the struggle was simply concerned with achieving democratic government." (p61, my emphasis — AM) Now on one level Bambrey's criticisms of the CPI are okay. It does indeed have a Menshevik 'stagist' position. But, if I may be allowed a cliché, he is throwing the Leninist baby out with the 'Stalinist' bathwater, by ignoring the different phases, and the tasks posed by those phases, in a country dominated by imperialism. The proletariat leads the masses to national liberation by mobilising them around slogans of national liberation, and through its hegemonic position from there through to socialism. The two phases are not superimposed but one

established regime, Democratic Kampuchea (DK), were backed by socialist China. Pol Pot bragged of the 'purity' of the Kampuchean social revolution that it had 'no foreign connection or involvement'. Apart from expressing nationalism, the above statement is also blatantly untrue: Vietnam had taken on, and smashed, sections of the previous Kampuchean leaders' (Lon Nol) army, besides supplying the Khmer Rouge with artillery and gun crews.

The KCP's nationalist line had an even more disastrous line within Kampuchea. Building socialism in such a country with the best of leaderships would have been difficult and problematic: "the more backward the country, the stronger is the hold of small scale agricultural production, patriarchy and isolation, which inevitably lend particular strength and tenacity to the deepest of petit bourgeois prejudices, ie, to national egoism and national narrow mindedness. These prejudices are bound to die out very slowly, for they can disappear only after imperialism and capitalism have disappeared in advanced countries, and after the entire foundation of backward countries' economic life has radically changed... Complete victory over capitalism cannot be won unless the proletariat and, following it, the mass of the working people in all countries and nations throughout the world voluntarily strike for alliance and unity." (VI Lenin, CW, Vol.31,

p.150)

The KCP did not provide, by any means, 'the best of leaderships'. Instead of combatting the backwardness of their country in alliance with the world revolutionary forces the KCP sealed Kampuchea off from them and accommodated themselves completely to the backwardness of the imperialist dominated peasant country which they had inherited. DK tried to pull 'instant communism' out of the hat based on small scale peasant commune production — extreme voluntarism and idealism.

However, the KCP was no monolith: widespread opposition existed to the leadership. This was largely centred in the Eastern Zone, although much reduced after a bloody purge of the Party in that area in 1976. Forces around comrade Heng Samrin took a pro-Vietnamese, pro-world communist movement stand. On December 2 1978 they formed the National United Front for the Salvation of Kampuchea (NUFSK), committed to "overthrow the dictatorial, militarist and genocidal regime. (cited on p.74). One month later with the assistance of Vietnam they had succeeded. They won a nation virtually destroyed by the DK regime: "When the dictatorship was removed from much of the country in early 1979, the entire society collapsed. Strained to the limits by the

Pol Pot regime, the collective psyche now snapped. The economy ceased to function; agricultural work was suspended; a confused and demoralised people abandoned all else and set off to return 'home'." (Gavan McCormick in *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, Vol. 10, issue 1/2). The new Peoples Republic of Kampuchea led by the reconstructed KPRP under Heng Samrin had an awesome task to redevelop the country to collectivise, nationalise and to plan. With the aid of Vietnam this has been remarkably successful; within four years the GNP rose by 43%.

And this has been done in the face of counterrevolutionary opposition from Kampuchea's 'contras' — two bourgeois 'resistance' forces who have been joined by the Khmer Rouge. This has now adopted a counterrevolutionary role itself; at the December 1981 CC meeting the KCP was dissolved and the bogus DK regime declared that it intended to "adopt the democratic system of government and will not construct socialism or communism." (quoted in Sibler, p.92). In July 1982 it formed a 'governmental coalition' with the other two groupings, with whom it shares a United Nations seat. The message from the Kampuchean people is clear, "almost everyone in Cambodia sees the Vietnamese as insurance against a return of Pol Pot" (*Newsweek*, April 8 1985).

Jim Green

False friends

Chris Brambrey, Ireland's permanent revolution, Bookmarks, London 1986, pp. 87 £2.50.

YOU MAY have come across posters posing the questions 'Ireland: which way for socialists?' and 'Is there a socialist solution?', heralding the 'rediscovery' of Ireland by the Socialist Workers Party. The reason for this is not some mass mobilisation on the part of the SWP in solidarity with the Irish people, but to promote a recent publication penned by their Irish 'expert' Chris Brambrey. *Ireland's Permanent Revolution*, I think it is fair to say, is not a good book.

Bambrey first presents us with a thumbnail sketch of Irish history and, while it's not exactly wrong shows the same grasp of historical materialism and depth of analysis as your average 'O' level history essay. Nevertheless, on past history he would at least merit a 'pass' grade. Not so on contemporary analysis.

Call me a nit-picker if you will, but I find Brambrey's omission of the term 'imperialism' throughout the book somewhat odd. Instead Brambrey inserts the term 'partition'. Germany is 'partitioned', but it is hardly the same ball game. However such linguistic sleight of hand is necessary if Brambrey is to justify his stand. Both he and the SWP attack, and quite rightly, the crass economism of *Militant* and the Workers' Party who project the struggle in Ireland as one simply between capital and labour. But this is done as a smoke-screen to cloud their own economism. In practice their own views are little different. Brambrey plays lip service to the fact that the Protestant working class is privileged relative to the Catholic working class, and that this privilege is maintained through the link with Britain. However he draws no practical conclusions from this. Like with the *Militant* and the Stickies at the end of the day it all comes down to unity through good old trade union struggle around 'bread and

flows through to the next through the Leninist process of uninterrupted revolution. One need only look to Lenin's slogan put forward in the *April Thesis* for justification of this. Perhaps a member of the SWP would like to explain to us whether it is 'Bread', 'Peace' or 'Land' which is the 'socialist demand'.

The dominant contradiction in Ireland is that which manifests itself as national oppression. The Third Congress of the Communist International in 1921 put forward the tactic of the anti-imperialist united front for communist parties in imperialist dominated countries, which enabled them to mobilise the oppressed masses, and not just the proletariat, against imperialism. The SWP, it seems, knows better. "Fundamentally," writes Bambrey, "the Provisionals believe that they can unite a majority of the Irish people across class lines." (p76) You mean like the FMLN, the Sandinists, the NLF, the July 26 Movement and the Bolsheviks with their worker/peasant alliance, Chris? Why, whatever gave them that idea? To give himself some credence Bambrey has to set up a straw dog of the Provisional IRA and Sinn Fein to demolish. He accuses them of limiting "themselves to ridding Ireland of the border." (p76) Wrong,

wrong, wrong, wrong! If they limit themselves to anything, it is ridding Ireland of British imperialism, something far more substantial than a mere border. Bambrey has the concepts 'imperialism' and 'border' so mixed up that he lands himself in all sorts of trouble. Directing his 'devastating polemic' once more at the republican movement he chastises them for seeing "full Irish independence as their aim. Until then, they say, socialism cannot be achieved." (p78) Is Bambrey saying then that socialism can be achieved without full Irish independence?

As Bambrey develops his argument it moves from the sublime to the ridiculous. His workerism takes him on flights of the sheerest fantasy. After arguing for a 'pure' class line he states that "we argue that only one class has an interest in ending partition of Ireland: the working class." (p86) Then why, pray tell, is another class leading the struggle? Is it an extreme example of 'false consciousness'?

More importantly for us is what Bambrey's theories amount to in practice in Britain. In two words, 'absolute poison'. The International Socialists, forerunners of the SWP, welcomed the troops into Derry in 1969 with a hearty 'hail fellows, well met': "The breathing space provided

by the presence of British troops is short but vital. Those who call for immediate withdrawal of troops before the men behind the barricades can defend themselves are inviting a pogrom which will hit first and hardest at socialists." (*Socialist Worker* September 11 1969). The IS, in short, supported the intervention of an imperialist state, on the grounds that it would have a calming effect on those uncivilised Irish.

The SWP's 'unconditional but critical support' (sic) of the republican movement consists of weak, passive support — until, that is, the IRA or INLA carries out an action. Then they 'unconditionally' condemn it. Thus with the killing of Airey Neave *Socialist Worker* commented: "It will be grist to the mill of the 'law and order' brigade's campaign for greater police powers."

Back in the book, Bambrey attacks the Provos for their emphasis on the armed struggle, and even for the Brighton bombing as it did not, according to Bambrey, bring the troops any nearer to withdrawal. There is no mention that withdrawal can only be achieved, as Sinn Fein has said, by a struggle being waged in Britain — a struggle in which the SWP has been conspicuous in its absence.

Alan Merrik

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The LENINIST

RALLY

The rally staged by The Leninist on November 8 to celebrate the 69th anniversary of the October Revolution and fifth anniversary of our publication was a resounding success. With standing room only some sixty comrades and friends packed our rally to listen to speeches from representatives of the Unemployed Workers Charter, the supporters of the Organisation of the Iranian People's Fedaian, as well as Mike Banda former general secretary of the WRP (now a leading figure in Communist Forum) and John Chamberlain from The Leninist. We will be giving a full report of our Under the Banner of October Rally and reprinting all speeches in full in the next edition but in the mean time here are extracts from the speeches of comrades Banda and Chamberlain.

Mike Banda

I was there at the beginning in the 1940s — and I was there at the end. And I do mean *the end*, because what we saw at the end of 1985 was not just the explosion of the Workers' Revolutionary Party, it was the terminal crisis. No attempts by anyone, anywhere in the world can reconstitute that weird and wonderful thing that we used to call 'the International Committee of the Fourth International'.

...I think it is absolutely vital to set this whole historical record straight, because there were thousands of people, both young and adults, workers and peasants, that were trapped in the Trotskyist movement. They wrongly assumed that this was authentic Leninism. They were the type of people who were quite correctly put off by the policies of the Communist International.

Policies such as class-collaborationist Popular Frontism, the abandonment of the class struggle policies of the communist parties during the Second World War led many to join the Trotskyist movement.

It became clear of course with the whole struggle of the world's working class that what in fact we had opted for was a kind of surrogate world movement.

... To me, the whole question of the Soviet Union is the question and what blew up the WRP wasn't the miners strike, wasn't even the issue of revolutionary morality and the practices of G. Healy, however abominable as they might have been, or South Africa or any of these questions: at the centre of it all were the contradictions lodged in the very programmatic and theoretical foundations of the Fourth International.

The question of the Soviet Union is in fact the touchstone of the world's working class. Russia of 1917 stands to us in the same way that the French revolution did to the revolutionary democrats of 19th century Europe. Any confusion, any indecision about the real historical and lawful nature of the development that took place from 1917 onwards will later affect what you do in your own particular country.

...in 60 years we have not built a movement anywhere in the world that you could call a viable movement, we have not led a single revolution, or in fact betrayed one: we never even got to first base! And this was precisely because of the confusion that arose after 1923 in relation to the Soviet Revolution and its successive stages of development. In fact we mistook the trees for the woods: the suppression of forms of political and Soviet

democracy with the material foundations of the Soviet Union itself.

John Chamberlain

We celebrate the October 1917 revolution not just because it was heroic, but also because it represented the first decisive step of mankind on the road from capitalism towards communism.

The Russian Revolution marked a decisive break, it opened up a new epoch for humanity. So on that basis, we don't just look upon the Russian Revolution as being a national revolution; it was very, very much an international revolution. Indeed, it reflected in its essence the contradictions of the capitalist world as a whole.

When we celebrate the Russian Revolution, we do not just celebrate its victory in 1917, we also celebrate the fact that it has survived against tremendous odds for 69 years.

... The success of the Russian Revolution did not just lie in the genius of Lenin as an individual. What it lay in was the ability of the Bolsheviks under Lenin to manoeuvre, to adapt, to change, to learn from the conditions of Russia.

These conditions constantly tested the ingenuity of the revolutionary vanguard. Far from the revolutionary vanguard being doctrinaire, far from it being stuck with the official centrist 'Marxism' of the Second International, under Lenin it brilliantly broke in theory and practice from doctrinaire 'Marxism' of the Kautskyite school.

Those who think that they are going to make revolution in Britain by simply following mainstream world communist movement orthodoxy that goes under the name of official Marxism-Leninism today are sadly mistaken. The Soviet Union, China, Albania — no country, no Party can think for us. Speaking for *The Leninist* that means that we do not ask our comrades from Turkey, or comrades from Iran or Chile or Portugal or the USSR to do our thinking for us. We learn off them, we take their experience and try to put these lessons into practice. There is no other way to test out such lessons.

That is what *The Leninist* is dedicated to. It is dedicated to taking hold of all the lessons of the world revolution, not in a doctrinaire way, but in a genuinely Marxist-Leninist way, for our class. In Iran, and Turkey, we have seen sincere comrades make mistakes, but then learn from their mistakes. We see them turn mistakes into strengths, to make them into achievements not only for their own revolutionary struggle, but for the struggle to complete the world revolution begun in October 1917.



RALLY UNDER THE BANNER OF OCTOBER

